1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

Dances Associated with War

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The term "war dance" has been so loosely used in the literature that it is sometimes difficult even to determine whether a particular ritual precedes or follows a battle. More subtle differences are even less frequently reflected in the accounts. However, several patterns may be tentatively isolated in the Plateau: (1) a dance seeking supernatural protection or prediction of success; (2) a dance of incitement; (3) a parade dance in solicitation of recruits; (4) a dance by the women during a war party's absence; (5) a processional dance by the returning war party after a victory; (6) a victory dance in the home camp.

The above is a conceptual classification, not an historical one. Relations of the latter nature will appear in the discussion.

The dance seeking supernatural aid or protection, or the supernatural prediction of success or failure, is spread from the Carrier to the Klamath along the western edge of the Plateau. It is described by Teit for the Thompson and western Shuswap:

> Before departing the [Shuswap] warriors held a war dance similar to that customary among the Thompson Indians. The war shaman sang alone, and danced in a circle, moving against the sun. He prayed in his song for success of the party, and that their enemies might become as women. When he had finished his shaman's song and incantations, the war chief, decorated in feathers and war-paint, joined him and struck up his war-song. Then all of the warriors followed and danced in a circle, moving in a direction against the course of the sun, singing, and dashing their spears to each side and praying that they might thus easily kill their enemies.

Besides such activities as these, various semi-magical means were used to determine specific details regarding the enterprise. A rather elaborate procedure was followed by the Shuswap:

> All the men put contributions of dried fish in a pile, some giving more, and others less. Then the shaman cut up all the fish, and distributed the pieces to the warriors, who sat in a circle, making the rounds in the direction opposite to the sun's course. Each warrior had to receive an equal number of pieces, without any being left over. If the shaman did not succeed in making an even division, he took the fish back, placed them in a heap, and covered them with a blanket. He retired to a spot a short distance away, danced, and sang, facing the pile, and using his shamanistic power to make the division come out even the next time. If he failed four times in this division of the war provisions, it was considered a bad omen, and the party did not start.[77]

[77] Teit, *Shuswap*, p. 611, see also p. 543; see Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 356.

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An identical account of prediction ritual was given to me by the Fraser River Shuswap adjacent to the Carrier, but the latter tribe does not share the practice, nor do any other Plateau tribes, as far as I could ascertain. This procedure smacks strongly of the Coast and it is hardly to be doubted that this was its ideological source. But the more specific Coast practices of prediction by counting mistaken steps of dancers or examining the hands for blood are found only among the Carrier, where, it will be recalled, shamans are war leaders.

Lillooet dances for supernatural aid are very similar, but are held after the party has departed.[78]

Southward, among the Wishram, the same objectives are sought, but dreams play a prominent role:

> A war dance took place before dawn of the first night of the expedition, in which dreams prefiguring the conflict were related. "We dreamt that we all became covered with blood. And then in the morning our chief said: 'Now do you make a fire and I shall tell you something.' So then we got up from bed, and then we took hold of [notched rasps]. And then we sang, now strongly we sang. And then the hero said: 'Now I shall tell you people what I dreamt. Now this day we shall die. I have seen the Paiutes. If we are to see them, it will rain.' Thus said the hero. And again we sang rubbing the [notched rasps] together. And again one man said: 'Now I shall tell you what I, for my part, dreamt. A grizzly bear ran away from us toward the setting sun. And then we caught only the grizzly bear's son. Thus did I dream.' And the people yelled their war-whoop."[79]

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And again, among the Klamath, a similar pattern is encountered. A preparatory performance

> is an indispensable preliminary to a raiding party. It can hardly be styled a war dance, as it is doubtful that it contains any true dance form. It is held in the open for from one to three nights depending on the size of the group engaged. It consists essentially of two things, mimicry of an onslaught by the warriors and prevision of their success by a shaman.[80]

Spinden writes of the Nez Percé that,

> In the ancient War dance there were two lines of dancers and a leader. Time was kept by rubbing a round stick up and down over a notched stick sewed to a stiff piece of hide. The songs were individual, as were those of the Scalp dance and the Guardian Spirit dance, and apparently were very much

[78] Teit, *Lillooet Indians*, p. 235.
[79] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, pp. 229 f.
[80] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 29 f.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

492 The native saddle consists of a rude wooden frame, under and over which is thrown a buffalo-robe, and which is bound to the horse by a very narrow thong of hide in place of the Mexican *cincha*. A raw-hide crupper is used; a deer-skin pad sometimes takes the place of the upper robe, or the robe and pad are used without the wooden frame. Stirrups are made by binding three straight pieces of wood or bone together in triangular form, and sometimes covering all with raw-hide put on wet; or one straight piece is suspended from a forked thong, and often the simple thong passing round the foot suffices. The bridle is a rope of horse-hair or of skin, made fast with a half hitch round the animal's lower jaw. The same rope usually serves for bridle and lariat. 285 Sharp bones, at least in later times, are used for spurs. 314 Wood is split for the few native uses by elk-horn wedges 321 driven by bottle-shaped stone mallets. Baskets and ves- 324 sels for holding water and cooking are woven of willow, bark, and grasses. Rushes, growing in all swampy localities are cut of uniform length, laid parallel and tied together for matting.

703 72 continued hostility. The wisest and bravest is annually elected war chief. The war chief carries a long whip and secures discipline by flagellation. Except a few feathers and pieces of red cloth, both the Flathead and Kootenai enter battle perfectly naked. *Cox's Adven.*, vol. i., pp. 232–45, vol. ii., p. 160. The Cayuse and Sahaptin are the most warlike of all the southern tribes. The Nez Percés good warriors, but do not follow war as a 702 profession. *Ross' Fur Hunters*, vol. i., pp. 185–6, 305, 308–12, vol. ii., pp. 93–6, 139. Among the Okanagans 'the hot bath, council, and ceremony of 726 smoking the great pipe before war, is always religiously observed. Their laws, however, admit of no compulsion, nor is the chief's authority implicitly obeyed on these occasions; consequently, every one judges for himself, and either goes or stays as he thinks proper. With a view, however, to obviate this defect in their system, they have instituted the dance, which answers every purpose of a recruiting service.' 'Every man, therefore, who enters within this 726 ring and joins in the dance..... is in honour bound to assist in carrying on the war.' *Id., Adven.*, pp. 319–20. Mock battles and military display for the entertainment of white visitors. *Hines' Voy.*, pp. 173–4. The Chilluckittequaws cut 721 off the forefingers of a slain enemy as trophies. *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 375–6. When scouting, 'Flathead chief would ride at full gallop so near the foe as to flap in their faces the eagle's tail streaming behind (from his cap), yet no one dared seize the tail or streamer, it being considered sacrilegious and fraught with misfortune to touch it.' *Tolmie*, in *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., p. 238. A thousand Walla Wallas came to the Sacramento River in 1846, to avenge the death of a young chief killed by an American about a year before. *Colton's Three Years in Cal.*, p. 52. One Flathead is said to be equal to four Blackfeet in battle. *De Smet, Voy.*, pp. 31, 49; *Dunn's Oregon*, pp. 312–13; *Gray's Hist. Or.*, pp. 171–4; *Parker's Explor. Tour*, pp. 233–7; *Stanley's Portraits*, pp. 65–71; *Ind. Life*, pp. 23–5; *Wilkes' Nar.*, in *U. S. Ex. Ex.*, vol. iv., p. 495.